

Mr. Speaker, the American people are not asking for medical savings accounts. Medical savings accounts sound good, but actually they only work for the wealthy and the healthy. Those people who are poor, those people who are middle class, those people who are sick will face rising premiums as the healthy and the wealthy get out of the health insurance pool.

That is why medical savings accounts are not a good idea. Let us put that idea on hold. Let us pass what the American people want, which is health care reform. That is why Republicans are bad managers, because they cannot see the forest for the trees.

#### THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF LAWRENCE WESTERMAN

(Mr. FLANAGAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FLANAGAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 100th birthday of Mr. Lawrence Westerman, a former resident of Chicago. It is appropriate that we celebrate Mr. Westerman's 100 years of life and recognize his years of service to our great Nation as we prepare to celebrate Independence Day.

Mr. Westerman was born on January 14, 1896, in Chicago, IL, of German immigrant parents. A World War I veteran who enlisted in the Illinois National Guard on June 16, 1916, Mr. Westerman was commissioned as a second lieutenant and, 2 years later, was promoted to first lieutenant and sent to France to serve in the 33d Division. In August of 1918, Mr. Westerman was severely wounded while defending our Nation and, accordingly, was awarded the Purple Heart. Interestingly, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Westerman may be the oldest recipient of this heroic award.

We should take this time to personally wish Mr. Westerman a belated happy birthday and also to thank him for his superior dedication and unwavering commitment to our great country. Mr. Westerman, thank you and we wish you all the best.

□ 1030

#### MEDICARE VERSUS PERSONNEL FILES

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this is the month of June, but I do not know, some of us may be thinking it is Halloween. The reason is because it seems that the Republicans want to play around with the ghost of the personnel files in the White House. Already the White House has indicated that there was no wrong intended. They have got a new director. The special prosecutor Kenneth Starr says there is nothing to investigate or pros-

ecute. But all we can hear is about the ghost of the personnel files. The reason is because they do not want to talk to us about the Medicare cuts. There is a \$1,000 increase with the Republican plan on seniors by the year 2002.

Listen, America, forcing hospitals to close, already hospitals have closed in neighborhoods in New York and they are closing in rural communities across the Nation because of the cuts in Medicare. What Americans need most is good health care. For our seniors in particular, we need hospitals open and with lower cost. Yes; rather than trying to fix the Medicare trust fund with reasonable responses and cuts in abuse and fraud, the Republicans want to get a large cut so that they can give tax cuts to the wealthy.

Stop with the ghost of Halloween and let us put a good Medicare plan on the table and provide health care for seniors and Americans across the Nation.

#### MEDICAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

(Mr. CHRYSLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CHRYSLER. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Marketing Research Institute released a poll of 1,000 workers across the Nation on their opinions on health care issues.

This poll found that 87 percent of the respondents wanted Congress to enact medical savings accounts.

But now, all of a sudden, MSA's have become a partisan issue with liberal Democrats. They have effectively shut down health care reform over this and other issues where there is widespread bipartisan support.

At the State level, MSA's have been passed by legislatures and signed by Governors of both parties. In every State where MSA's have been passed, they passed with overwhelming bipartisan majorities. In five States, MSA's were passed by both Chambers unanimously. We have pilot programs.

Mr. Speaker, it is a shame the liberal Democrats here in Washington have resorted to obstructionism. They have no new ideas, they have no positive agenda, and all they can do is stand in the way and throw up road blocks to serious health care reforms that are popular with the American people.

#### DOING BETTER ON HEALTH CARE

(Mrs. CLAYTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, we should indeed ask ourselves what are the implications of this Medicare discussion. Are they the realities my colleagues on the other side say? Well, the realities of cutting \$168 million from rural America in the State I come from will mean that many of my senior citizens will have to pay more for their premium. The reality will mean that they will be forced into health care plans where they have no option.

The reality will mean in many instances the hospitals that depend heavily on Medicare and Medicaid may have to close. So the reality of cutting so severely does not protect for the future. It denies opportunity. Also, what should be the expectation for us as we look for Medicare and the security in the future? It means we need to come together as bipartisan and to understand there are ways to protect but not necessarily cut and be extreme.

Mr. Speaker, there are ways in which we can help the citizens who need help now and to protect in the future. It requires us not to be extreme. It requires us to think about the poor as we think about the rich. Mr. Speaker, we can do better than this.

#### THE ENERGY STANDARD

(Mr. GILLMOR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, today the House will debate the interior appropriations bill. While I support many of the provisions of this bill, I do have serious concerns in at least one area. Nearly 20 years ago, Congress asked the Energy Department to set energy efficiency standards for home appliances. This was an effort to stem the unnecessarily rapid rate of energy consumption in this country. By establishing national standards for everyone to use, a valuable measuring stick was created to permit manufacturers to commit time, investment and engineering resources. However, this was all placed on hold in our spending bill in 1996 which put a moratorium on rulemaking.

While I have never been one to support increased regulation, this issue should have been handled better. Congress ought not be in the business of artificially manipulating a steady market once it is established. Yet this is exactly what the appropriations bill report language purports to do.

Second, the issue of energy standard should be dealt with through the Committee on Commerce, the committee of jurisdiction. What the committee is attempting to do is to interfere in the economic marketplace.

#### THE INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS BILL

(Mr. DICKS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the so-called Riggs amendment. In the full committee, on the Appropriations Committee, we took up the Interior appropriations bill. After last year, I think all of us learned that we should be very careful about extraneous riders to that bill. But the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS] decided to offer an amendment that would knock out a crucial,